

From the Heart

A Publication for Friends of Presbyterian Children's Homes and Services

Fall 2015

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Giving Thanks for those who adopt

November is National Adoption Month.

Todd and Samuel (ages 5 and 6) were removed from their birth family by Child Protective Services and temporarily placed in a foster home. After some time, they were placed in "kinship care" with their grandmother and great aunt.

When Todd and Samuel's grandmother, Judy, began using drugs, their great aunt, Kristin, was left to care for the two boys by herself. Kristin loved the boys, but after a few weeks, she began to experience health problems and realized she was not able to provide the care the boys need.

Kristin approached a PCHAS Child and Family Specialist and expressed an interest in open adoption for her nephews. She learned that because Todd and Samuel's biological parental rights were not terminated, she could not place them in adoption. She hired an attorney, who was instrumental in terminating parental rights, which made the boys eligible for adoption.



Kristin visited the adoptive family, the Morgans, over a period of months while the family received extensive training from PCHAS. They secured a TBRI therapist (see pages 6 and 7 for more information about TBRI), and the family is adjusting well. Todd and Samuel are now settled in a wonderful, permanent home, and they are thankful to still have a relationship with Kristin.

Todd and Samuel's adoption was made possible thanks to the cooperation of many PCHAS staff, who worked as a team. The staff came from several PCHAS programs, including Child and Family, Foster Care and Adoption.

As you celebrate Thanksgiving with your family this year, please pray for Todd and Samuel, their adoptive family and Kristin. Please also pray for the nearly 200 children PCHAS will help find permanent homes for in 2015.

Remember that November is NATIONAL ADOPTION MONTH!

Please visit: texas.pchas.org/adoption-program-texas
for more information about our adoption program.



Presbyterian Children's
Homes and ServicesSM
of Texas and Louisiana

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT AND CEO



PCHAS President and CEO, Dr. Ed Knight, with Group Home Residents

As you read through this addition of “From the Heart,” there will be no doubt in your mind why we named the newsletter as we did. Each article reveals the emotional bonds that have formed between PCHAS and

all those who share in our passion and commitment to help children and families. Throughout my years of being a part of Presbyterian Children’s Homes and Services, I have been amazed at how quickly and deeply this bond is formed.

I am convinced the reason lies in more than sheer emotion. Those who look closely at the programs and services of PCHAS can clearly see the quality of our staff and the integrity with which they carry out their duties.

This same quality and integrity is reflected in our business practices and all aspects of our operations. I am so grateful to the supporters, volunteers, Ambassadors, and staff who blend both heart and mind to ensure the young people in our care will have the opportunities they deserve for a promising future.

Blessings to you all.



Why I Give

Jill Foote
Houston, Texas

How did you hear about PCHAS?

My aunt and uncles, when they were children, received excellent care at the Itasca Group Home. Before he passed away at the age of 94, my uncle celebrated being the oldest former Itasca resident. What stands out most to me is the tremendous love and care that my aunt and uncles received at the campus.

How long have you been serving this ministry?

I have been a long-time donor to PCHAS. For the past six years, I have served as a PCHAS Ambassador for St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church.

“Families served by PCHAS literally become members of the PCHAS family, and receive loving care for the rest of their lives.”

-Jill Foote

What makes you passionate about PCHAS’ ministry?

The care the children and families receive through PCHAS is Christ-centered and is lifelong. No other organization seems to place as much value on the lifelong relationships that PCHAS does. Families served by PCHAS literally become members of the PCHAS family, and receive loving care for the rest of their lives.

Are there certain programs you are especially passionate about?

In addition to the Group Homes, which are near and dear to my heart, I am excited about the new single-parent campus in Houston. I have enjoyed hearing the success stories we have already experienced with our first seven mothers and their children, and I look forward to hearing more.

Anything else you admire about PCHAS?

As an educator (at Rice University), I really love the emphasis PCHAS places on education. I was so excited to hear that one of the mothers was not only a full-time student, but had received honors for top academic performance at Houston Community College!

Any other comments about your relationship with PCHAS?

I look forward to getting my church more plugged in to the PCHAS mission so that more members of the congregation can become PCHAS volunteers. I am excited to continue my lifelong relationship with PCHAS and its ministry.

The Health Benefits of

VOLUNTEERING

By: Chris Perez



“The essence of life is to serve others and do good” – Aristotle

The definition of (and the act of) volunteering is simple: you donate your time to help someone in need. Helping is not only the right thing to do; volunteering one’s time has been shown to be good for mind, body and soul. In studies about volunteering, researchers have found that volunteering can come with many health benefits, for example:

- Volunteering can reduce stress, and a reduction in stress often means reduced blood pressure.

- Volunteering can be mentally stimulating. It can be good for those who want to learn new things and gain new skills, and it can boost a volunteer’s memory and critical thinking.

- An increase in social interaction associated with volunteering can help older adults who may be prone to dementia.

- Increased longevity can be seen in as little as 100 hours of volunteering within a one year timespan.

Be a Volunteer Superhero!



If you want to volunteer for PCHAS, visit: texas.pchas.org/volunteer

Why I Volunteer

Jean Abernathy

Q How did you first hear about Presbyterian Children’s Homes and Services (PCHAS)?

A In 2008 I retired and wanted to get involved with a church. I joined Hope Presbyterian, which was my parent’s church and also the church where I was married (34 years ago!). At the time, the Service Commission needed someone to serve as a liaison with PCHAS. I connected with the Development Department at PCHAS, and my ministry with PCHAS began.

Q How long have you been serving this ministry and in what capacity?

A I have been volunteering at PCHAS since 2008. I volunteer at the Central Office and serve as an Ambassador for PCHAS. I continue to look for opportunities to put PCHAS at the forefront and to help get others involved in PCHAS’ mission.

Q What makes you passionate about PCHAS?

A I am extremely passionate about children and advocate for several organizations which support children. I believe that children are our future and I want to do what I can to help children and make their future and our future better. Since PCHAS programs are so focused on children, it makes me passionate about the work I do here.

Q Of other charities that you’re associated with, is there anything about PCHAS that sets it apart or holds a special place in your heart?

A I have worked with other charities, but the children at PCHAS are special. The staff here does a wonderful job working with the children and the children are so positive and grateful for the care they receive.

Q Do you have any additional comments?

A I stand behind the work that PCHAS does and hope to continue to find ways to support PCHAS. I look forward to more volunteer opportunities becoming available as the new Austin Foster Care and Adoption Programs continue to grow.

FINDING SISTERS IN CHRIST

By: Laura Nettleton

Foundation Supervisor and Senior Development Officer,
Austin/San Antonio and Southwest Texas



The Presbyterian Women of Mission Presbytery hold hands and sing together, "Peace within the Storm" written by Dotsy Dwyer at the 2015 PW Spring Gathering at Mo Ranch. (Photo Credit: First Presbyterian Church of Seguin)

I had landed in the eagle's nest.

At least that's what I decided to call my room perched high in the Manor House with a 360 degree view of Mo Ranch. I'd be staying here for the next two nights as a workshop leader for the Mission Presbytery PW Spring Gathering.



Immediately, I was surprised by how welcomed each woman made me feel. Any fear I had as an outsider was extinguished as the women introduced themselves. There is no greater feeling than to be welcomed into a group as warmly as I was at this gathering. As I began to mingle with the women, I quickly realized this was a colorful group filled with artists, intellectuals, business women, thinkers, and doers.

When it came time for my workshop on Saturday, I was excited to speak to this group of impressive women about an organization I have grown to love: Presbyterian Children's Homes and Services (PCHAS). I shared information about the work we're doing to help children and families in need and thanked the women for being with us from our very first day in 1903 and ever since. I was encouraged and energized by the sincere interest all of my PW friends expressed in what we are doing through our seven core programs.

After my workshops ended, I attended Carol Nies' workshop on the importance of rest. She shared that it is through rest that we can experience a special closeness to God. And she was right. The PW Spring Gathering was about community, rest, and renewal – a wonderful gift.

Throughout the weekend I saw many extraordinary things: the strength of women overcoming cancer, a late night gathering of a group of women honoring the passing of a dear friend. They sang; they shared their favorite memories of her; they laughed; they cried. It was beautiful, and God knew it too.

When Saturday evening rolled around, everyone gathered for a lively pajama party. There was a conga line and beach balls and karaoke!

The highlight, however, came when all were invited to tell a joke. One by one each woman told a joke, and the room erupted in laughter. It was the catharsis we all seemed to need.

Later that night as I lay in bed, the moon shined into my room with a resonating brightness. It was beautiful, serene. I couldn't help but feel something special happened this weekend.

The next morning as we gathered one last time for worship at the Sunday service, we embraced our bond as women. We stood together holding each other's hands and sang in unison the weekend's theme song, "Peace within the Storm." Those gathered then took an offering and the 300 some women in attendance donated more than \$4,000 to PCHAS! This wasn't just one generous act of giving.



It was hundreds of small acts uniting together to be a part of something grand.

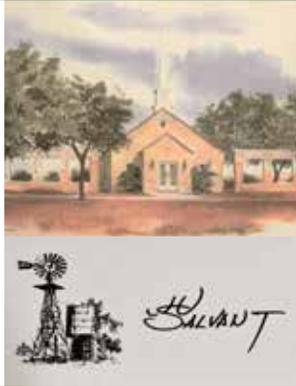
We at PCHAS are so grateful for our Sisters in Christ who care about their communities and are driven to make the world a caring place. What I have felt for the last two and a half years while working at PCHAS was again

solidified: the power of generosity is one of the most inspiring elements to see in the human heart.

I hope to soon return to the eagle's nest and to once more feel God's presence amidst my new friends. Thank you PW of Mission Presbytery for making me part of your retreat and for being so generous.

May these words bless your ministry:

"Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes not me but the one who sent me." –Mark 9:37.



JOAN SALVANT

The Artist Behind PCHAS' Central Office Water Color Paintings

By Lindsay Sloan

If you have visited PCHAS' Central Office in Austin, you have no doubt seen the 15 beautiful water color paintings of PCHAS' campuses in Waxahachie and Itasca. The paintings hold a place of honor in PCHAS' main conference room. What you may not know is that the artist who created them, Joan Salvant, is a seventh-generation Presbyterian married to a former Presbyterian pastor, Ed Salvant, and that all the paintings were done pro bono.



When PCHAS opened its central office in Austin, Joan traveled to the



campuses, meeting the children who lived there and making sketches of the children and the buildings that she would later use to make the paintings. "One of the things I have always believed is that people receive gifts from God, and when we are given a gift, we are expected to use it for good. It is important to me that I use my gifts to do the Lord's work. And I try to do so in any way I can," she said.

Joan was very impressed with what she saw when she visited PCHAS' campuses. "It warms your heart to see where the children live and

to see what PCHAS has done for them," she said about her visit to the Itasca campus. "PCHAS provides a beautiful, Christian, loving environment for these children; a place they can call home. The PCHAS staff working there are incredibly dedicated to their cause."

In addition to donating her beautiful water colors, she and her husband support PCHAS in many other ways, including making monetary donations. PCHAS is very grateful to Joan and Ed Salvant and to all of its dedicated supporters. Thank you!



CONNECT FOR HOPE TBRI CAMP 2015

Healing Happens at second annual PCHAS TBRI Camp

Congratulations to PCHAS staff and volunteers who worked tirelessly to plan and execute the camp!





Mike Evans (buddy), Becky Evans (Child and Family Program staff member), Ashley Scoggins (Foster Care and Adoption staff member) and Leah Gilliam (Foster Care and Adoption staff member)



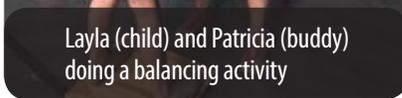
Layla (child) and Patricia (buddy) doing a balancing activity



Emily and her TCU buddy doing a balancing activity



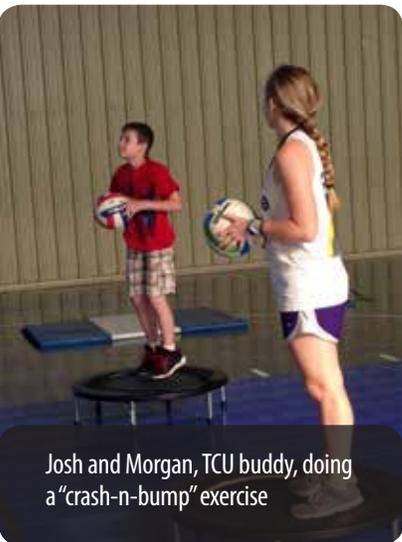
Parachute activity



Volleyball with giant weighted ball



Geralda Dukuly and Tara Moore (PCHAS Foster/Adoption staff), movement/mindfulness group leaders



Josh and Morgan, TCU buddy, doing a "crash-n-bump" exercise



Tara Moore (PCHAS staff) and Otis (from Child and Family program)

Another successful PCHAS TBRI Camp has passed and with it comes healing. This unique summer camp for families and children in crisis gives caregivers and at-risk children the support to help mend the trauma a child has experienced.

TBRI, or Trust-Based Relational Intervention, is a therapeutic model based on how children's brains react to trauma. When children experience trauma from physical abuse, mental abuse, drug abuse, abandonment, or neglect, their brain chemistry is altered.

With the help of trained TCU (Texas Christian University) Child Development volunteers and PCHAS staff, a systematic approach to addressing developmental trauma was introduced. This process brings attention to the physical, emotional and self-management coping skills that together bring a sense of safety, connection and behavioral awareness in traumatized children.

Presbyterian Children's Homes and Services is a 501(c)3 charitable organization. All gifts are tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law. We do not render professional tax advice. Each person should consult a professional advisor.

Are you receiving duplicate mailings or no longer wish to be included on our mailing list?

Contact us:

1.800.888.1904

info@pchas.org

Presbyterian Children's Homes and Services
Development Office
4407 Bee Cave Road, Suite 520
Austin, TX 78746

Be sure to include your complete name and address.

Connect with PCHAS



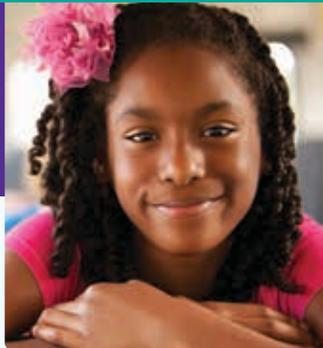
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a **big** difference
in a child's life.



Please consider supporting
Presbyterian Children's Homes
and Services.

Your support will make a big difference in the lives
of at-risk children. Each year, Presbyterian Children's
Homes and Services helps more than 4,200 children
and families.

Lend your support today

**To donate online, visit:
texas.pchas.org/donate**

You're Invited!

Presbyterian Children's Homes and Services cordially
invites you to attend these exciting events this
summer and fall:



Be a Volunteer Superhero!

November 7th: Waxahachie Super Saturday

Contact **Judy Offutt**,
judy.offutt@pchas.org; 254.687.2302

November 12th: Dallas Luncheon

Contact **Sara Newell**,
sara.newell@pchas.org; 972.937.1319

November 17th: Midland Reception

Contact **Samuel Smith**,
samuel.smith@pchas.org; 817.948.8746